

Mead and Phillips up for transfer in big upheaval

KEITH MEAD and **Alan Phillips**, two of the names synonymous with **Wycombe Wanderers'** success of the seventies, have been placed on the transfer list by manager **Andy Williams** in a major upheaval at **Loakes Park**.

Not only will this famous defensive pairing be missing at the start of the next season but leading striker **Stewart Atkins** will be also. **Atkins** has just signed for Southern League side **Dunstable** at a fee of £1,500.

The departure of **Mead** and **Phillips**, allied to the temporary retirement of **Bobby Davies** last month, means the complete break-up of a defence that has been second to none in the **Isthmian League** during the past four years. Only **Paul Birdseye** of the back four is now left.

With **Dylan Evans** also on the transfer list, it is the end

of an era — and a very successful one at that — at **Loakes Park**. **Les Reed**, who was on contract, is another not to have been retained.

Mr Williams says he will be able to replace all the people that are leaving as he has six potential new signings, whom he will not name until the formalities are completed. But they are believed to be a centre-half, a left-back, a midfield player and three forwards.

Drastic changes

He explained the departure of **Mead** and **Phillips** by saying: "The balance of the side has not been right and we needed to make one or two drastic changes. We finished sixth last season and with the same players could have finished sixth again."

"I didn't want to settle for that and so felt I had to make changes for next season. Both **Keith** and **Alan** have done **Wycombe** proud and they will both do other sides proud."

Mead was particularly disappointed about leaving. He said:

Story by MICHAEL KNOX

"I can't say I'm very pleased about it. I am extremely sorry and surprised that both of us are going."

"The club has been fantastic to me. I've had a very happy time both on and off the field and made lots of friends. That's why I wanted to finish my football career there in a couple of years' time."

"I'll have to wait and see what comes along. But I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all the fans."

Mead, 33, joined **Wycombe** in January 1974 as an England amateur international, and was a highly consistent centre-back who gave 100 per cent every game, whether the opponents were **Middlesbrough** or **Chalfont St Peter**.

There were signs at the start of the season that his age was catching up with him, but his determination saw him again regain his place in the side and he was solidly personified at the end of the term. However, the

performance of **Steve Hardwick** now means he is surplus to requirements.

Surprising

The departure of **Phillips** is more surprising. Until he went away on business at the end of March, he proved a most consistent centre-half, whose clumsiness was not often pretty, but was highly effective.

Phillips, a Welsh international, came to **Loakes Park** in August 1974 and was alongside **Mead** in those epic encounters with **Middlesbrough**. However he returned to his old club **Hendon** at the end of the season when **John Delaney** returned.

However, with 12 months he was back to resume his position at the heart of the defence. He was not always popular with the fans who felt he gave away too many free kicks in dangerous positions, but his wholehearted commitment could not be doubted, and his ability in the air was second to none. His successor will have much to live up to.

The departure of **Atkins** came out of the blue as he had not been transfer-listed. But **Dun-**

stable were so determined to obtain his services that they were prepared to pay £1,500.

As this was nearly £1,000 more than the **Blues** paid **Chesham** for him, they found it an offer they could not refuse and released him.

Atkins started last season brilliantly with a hat-trick against **Hendon**. But a hamstring, suffered during that game, reduced his effectiveness thereafter, although he scored some great opportunist goals. His header against **Blyth** will long be remembered.

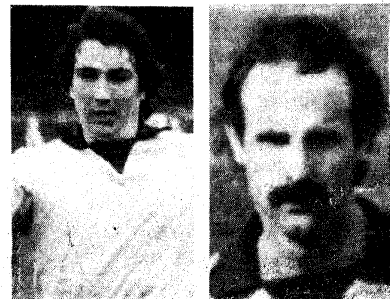
These departures will certainly give **Blues** a new look this season, but it remains to be seen whether these changes have been for the good.

Blues dance

WYCOMBE Wanderers are staging the annual dinner dance at the **Excelsior Hotel, Heathrow Airport**, on Friday, June 22. All those wanting tickets (£7.50 each) should contact secretary **John Goldsworthy**, 35 West Drive, **Totteridge**, High Wycombe (Tel. H.W. 38042), or treasurer **Gerald Cox**, 1 Kelvin Close, High Wycombe.



ALAN PHILLIPS ... a stalwart centre-half.



STEWART ATKINS ... to Dunstable

KEITH MEAD ... surprised